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Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction, recovery and prevention in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster

Report of the Secretary-General***

Summary

Three and a half years after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, progress is apparent across the affected region: displaced persons are residing in newly constructed homes, children are in school and hospitals are being rebuilt and repaired. Yet, while physical reconstruction efforts have been actualized, many complex challenges remain as the region continues to recover. Each affected country faces different challenges and thus the picture of progress is an uneven one; however, common to all countries is the realization that it will take many years for individual households and the wider economies on which they depend to recover from one of recorded history's most destructive natural disasters.

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I. Introduction

1. On 26 December 2004, an earthquake off the western coast of northern Sumatra, measuring 9.0 on the Richter scale, triggered an intensely destructive tsunami which affected 12 countries and took 186,983 lives. Hundreds of thousands of persons were displaced and over 3 million persons were affected, half of whom lost their sources of livelihood. The tsunami had the greatest impact on rural coastal communities, many of which were already poor and vulnerable and had few livelihood options. The hardest-hit and most severely affected countries were India, Indonesia, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Malaysia, Myanmar, Seychelles, Somalia and the United Republic of Tanzania were also affected.

2. The present report, prepared as a follow-up to General Assembly resolution 62/91, provides an overview of progress, achievements and challenges confronting India, Indonesia, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand, and focuses primarily on recovery efforts in key social sectors. It also addresses aid and recovery coordination, models of Government humanitarian and recovery institutions, transparency and accountability to donors, as well as risk reduction, tsunami early warning and incorporation of prevention in development planning. It does not purport to cover the field, in terms of progress achieved, which has been substantial in all five countries, or of the challenges that recovery actors will continue to face as efforts become mainstreamed.

II. Impact of the tsunami and progress of recovery efforts

3. During the course of recovery efforts, considerable strides were taken towards rehabilitation and reconstruction. Across the five most affected countries, progress was evident throughout 2006 and 2007. Many countries have fulfilled their promise to rebuild better, evidenced by the number of safer houses constructed, improved education and health facilities, and important steps forward in disaster risk management and disaster risk reduction.

4. Much of this progress has been achieved in the face of serious obstacles, such as logistic hurdles, administrative constraints, lagging capacity, coordination challenges, rising inflation and the resurgence of the conflict in Sri Lanka. Future recovery and reconstruction efforts across the entire tsunami-affected region will confront these and other challenges, ranging from operational to policy issues.

5. Continuing challenges for leading agencies have been, inter alia, the linkage of various ongoing recovery processes, provision or access to critical information and capacity-building of local governments. For example, many tsunami information systems provided unanalysed data on inputs that were not linked with ongoing needs assessments. Moreover, many implementing agencies' planning systems were and continue to be based on original assessments and commitments, despite the fact that needs have changed considerably in many sectors.

India

6. The tsunami affected more than 1,400 miles of India's southern coastline. Across some 1,089 villages, 12,405 people died and close to 2 million people were

affected, with nearly 650,000 displaced. The state of Tamil Nadu bore the brunt of the disaster, followed by the territory of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Total post-tsunami needs were assessed at US$ 2.1 billion. Across all areas, approximately one third of the affected population allegedly belong to underprivileged and marginalized social groups, such as Dalits or tribal men and women.

7. In India the tsunami destroyed or damaged an estimated 100,000 houses. The state governments of Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, as well as the union territories of Puducherry and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, proposed to rebuild about 76,000 houses during initial reconstruction. In response to this proposal, approximately 72,000 houses have been or are being built at the present time. The government of Tamil Nadu has initiated the construction of 55,000 additional houses, funded through the central Government or the World Bank, which will fall within 1 kilometre from the coastline or 200 metres from backwaters. In Kerala about 10,860 additional houses are anticipated for construction.

8. Education in the post-tsunami phase is critical to the protection and development of each child. More than 260,000 children were affected by the tsunami. Interventions ensured that classes resumed as quickly as possible, that quality education packages were introduced and that child-friendly environments were created through furniture and supply distribution. By January 2008, a total of 138,588 children and 3,472 teachers in the state of Tamil Nadu benefited from these interventions. Extracurricular activities and participatory learning have been especially promoted to harness the potential of children to actively manage social change, and teachers have been trained to implement activity-based learning, the methodology of which has been successfully extended beyond tsunami-affected schools to all 47,000 primary and middle schools in the state.

9. Health infrastructure was also significantly affected. In addition to reconstructing facilities and providing medical supplies, several other initiatives were undertaken to improve the quality of health care and post-disaster health issues. To reduce infant mortality rates, 1,180 village-level health workers, 870 state-level medical officers and 200 faculty members of paediatrics departments in 14 Government medical colleges were trained in the use of protocols regarding integrated management of neonatal and childhood illness. A total of 800 health staff were trained on behaviour change communication, village health nurses in 13 affected districts were trained in newborn care and 6 fully equipped mobile health units were provided for emergency response to sick newborns and pregnant mothers. All 19,600 workers from Integrated Child Development Services centres were trained in infant and young child feeding practices, and the newly formed mother support groups covered a population of 20 million in the affected districts. Finally, media communication educated the public on various health issues.

10. The tsunami's traumatic impact on its victims necessitated the delivery of psychosocial services to assist in the normalization of people's lives. To do this, a community-based approach was developed and implemented by training local people as community-level workers to provide support to 225,000 people through counselling, social assistance and patient referrals for further specialized health care. Child rights awareness programmes, school-based counselling and community-based activities at childcare centres have also helped more than 115,000 children recover from distress and protect them from potential abuse and exploitation. A

social awareness programme in Kerala educates over 700,000 children about the values of democracy and gender equality.

11. In tsunami-affected states, the prevalence of HIV/AIDS is among the highest in India. In this context, the United Nations, in partnership with key stakeholders, has implemented projects to address the needs of those affected — in particular those at risk of being trafficked, trafficking survivors and HIV-positive individuals. Two thousand village vigilance committees have been educated about trafficking and HIV/AIDS, 500 peer educators have been identified and trained and more than 30,000 women and children in the tsunami-affected areas have been familiarized with HIV/AIDS issues. A multimedia campaign addressing the protection of people's rights reached thousands across Tamil Nadu, 3 legal aid clinics have been established to provide justice to HIV-positive individuals and more than 2,000 police have been sensitized to HIV issues, including stigma and discrimination surrounding high-risk groups and people living with the disease.

12. Livelihood recovery efforts have focused on re-establishing prior economic activities and developing alternative livelihoods through vocational training and small enterprise support. Wage-employment and self-employment opportunities are being created for youth, women and disadvantaged people, with skills-training of 3,500 beneficiaries for placement in income-generating activity. Two thousand beneficiaries are undergoing entrepreneurship training through the well-recognized International Labour Organization methodology, "start and improve your business". Entrepreneurship beneficiaries will also gain from support/linkages with banks and other organizations to ensure stable business establishment.

13. Important advances are being made to affect fisheries policy at the state levels. Models of community-based fishery management are piloted in 55 villages in Tamil Nadu and Kerala with the involvement of locally elected representatives. Lessons from these initiatives will contribute to the development of a stakeholder-based fisheries management policy framework in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. Many crucial studies are under way — for trawler-fishing fleet reduction in Palk Bay, financial services support for fishermen and diversification of fisheries livelihoods. Similarly, crucial pilot projects are under way to encourage microfish business support, stakeholder-based harbour management and backwater aquaculture for fisherwomen.

14. Disaster risk management is an integral part of reconstruction and rehabilitation in the tsunami-affected states of India. Efforts are being made to link systematic and sustainable disaster risk management efforts at district, state and national levels. These have included vulnerability mapping, coastal management planning, construction of cyclone shelters, disaster-proof housing and disaster risk reduction capacity-strengthening of governments and communities. By January 2008, 3,200 members of community early warning teams received training in comprehension and response to early warning messages. Promotional materials and training manuals have been published to disseminate preparedness methodologies among major stakeholders.

15. Policy support and coordination is imperative in the disaster risk reduction framework. In Tamil Nadu the creation of a state-level coordination and resource centre, together with a network of district-level centres was necessary for the enhancement of partnerships between government and civil society organizations in aid coordination. With the conclusion of tsunami recovery operations, these centres

have been institutionalized and repositioned in the development context to facilitate preparedness and disaster risk reduction. A Web-based beneficiary tracking system has also been developed for the government of Tamil Nadu as a tool for aid and information management, resulting in strengthened local governance, accountability and transparency, coordination, and efficient and smooth disaster risk management operation.

16. The tsunami had unprecedented consequences for the region's fragile coastal ecosystems. A two-phase approach was adopted to assess rapid coastal development issues, increased resource needs and changing legislation, while determining interventions to ensure long-term security and sustainability of these unique coastal environments. Baseline studies were conducted and long-term monitoring protocols for continued conservation were implemented. Programmes piloting coastal eco-restoration strategies will benefit local communities in terms of livelihood security and coastal protection from natural disasters. Furthermore, in February 2008 the Ministry of Finance of India declared its intention to establish a permanent institution to address climate change issues and strengthen disaster risk reduction linkages.

17. The United Nations, in partnership with the government, has aimed to create a safe environment for affected populations through hygiene promotion programmes and construction of 650 eco-sanitation toilets in Tamil Nadu. In 192 intermediate shelters a waste management system was created to educate children about the importance of maintaining healthy environments. In the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, 331 rainwater harvesting systems were constructed to improve access to safe water in dwelling units, schools, *anganwadis* and health centres.

Indonesia

18. Over three years have passed since the earthquake and tsunami in Aceh — and a subsequent earthquake on Nias Island in March 2005 — which caused immense physical destruction, killing more than 130,000 people and affecting the livelihoods of at least 500,000. Financing needs to cover the long-term recovery of Aceh and Nias overall are now calculated at $8 billion (including $1.2 billion for inflation and $1.9 billion for building back better), of which $7 billion has already been committed to specific projects. Future expenditures will be constrained, however, where absorptive capacity for these funds remains insufficient. Strategic planning and coordination must be strengthened to ensure the necessary physical, social, economic and legal infrastructure to absorb greater recovery and rehabilitation spending to meet evolving needs.

19. With 162,341 new permanent houses and repairs to an additional 85,000 required, the housing sector has presented the greatest challenge to Indonesia. By the end of 2007, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) had constructed 19,923 transitional shelters, accommodating more than 80,000 people. As of February 2008, 2,056 households remain in transitional shelters, reduced from an original total of some 16,688 households. Challenges remain to improve community infrastructure and to complete all construction by the end of October 2008.

20. Work in the social services has focused on physical reconstruction and quality improvement. The disaster severely impacted the education sector, killing 2,500

teachers and destroying or damaging approximately 2,636 schools. To date, 798 permanent schools have been rebuilt or rehabilitated, supplemented by 379 temporary facilities. A total of 21,977 teachers have been trained in Aceh and Nias. The lack of coordination and planning has slowed efforts in the education sector, as evidenced by agency competition for building sites and reports of overconstruction in some areas.

21. In the health sector, which saw 122 buildings damaged or destroyed, 386 health facilities — including 3 hospitals, 55 satellite health posts and 68 health centres — have been rebuilt or rehabilitated in Aceh, with an additional 19 in Nias. Figures on reconstruction exceed the number of health facilities affected by the disaster because many health centres damaged during the war in Aceh were also slated for rehabilitation. In addition to reconstruction, there is a continuing need to provide medical supplies and skilled personnel to staff these new facilities, and the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency for Aceh and Nias is providing access to training and education in order to develop capacity and provision of health services.

22. Many activities have focused on the assessment of the post-tsunami environmental situation in Aceh and North Sumatra. In a sign of progress towards disaster risk reduction, over 36 km of coastal protection (such as sea walls) and 21 km of saltwater dykes have thus far been constructed. Two mangrove reforestation projects in the Banda Aceh area have been funded and implemented by the United Nations, Wetlands International and other local organizations. Local communities are supportive of the projects and have noticed increased biodiversity (shrimps, crabs and wading birds), which, consequently, is strengthening the basis of their livelihoods. Concerns exist, however, regarding building quality and the reconstruction of some communities too close to the coast. Nonetheless, increased community awareness and the planned design and mapping of escape routes and safe refuge areas will contribute to safer and more sustainable communities.

23. The tsunami had a massive impact on livelihoods. In addition to damage to the productive sector totalling $1.2 billion, 100,000 small business owners lost their sources of livelihood, 13,828 boats were damaged, 27,593 hectares of fish ponds were destroyed, 60,000 farmers were displaced and close to 150,136 hectares of agricultural land were damaged. Livelihoods restoration is visible, with over two thirds of the male labour force back to work in both rural and urban areas. In addition, 3,142 boats have been distributed, 12,935 hectares of fishponds rehabilitated and more than 63,923 hectares of agricultural land rehabilitated.

24. The 2008 Tsunami Recovery Indicator Package and World Bank poverty assessment both show that poverty has returned to pre-tsunami levels in Aceh. This is likely the case owing to the tremendous impact of international and domestic support, but also suggests that poverty levels may have been initially overestimated in the wake of the disaster. In any case, poverty remains a central challenge for Aceh and Nias given the damage done to rural farming and fisheries, and the key livelihoods of the poor.

25. The peace process in Aceh stands as perhaps the most important example of building back better. Following the signing of the peace agreement in 2005 and democratic elections in 2006, no major upsets to the peace process have occurred — a momentous achievement following three decades of conflict. Efforts have intensified in 2008 to ensure a conflict-sensitive approach to longer-term recovery with the near finalization of a multi-year government plan for reintegration and

peacebuilding, with support from the United States of America, the European Union, the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Organization for Migration and other partners.

26. Disaster risk reduction poses other important challenges. The government's disaster response entity in Aceh lost significant capacity and presently operates without a formalized standard operating procedure. Guidance and support to disaster risk reduction efforts at governance and programmatic levels continue to be provided in concert with the requirements of the Hyogo Framework for Action, 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters.[1] The passage into law of the Disaster Management Bill in April 2007 was a highly significant step towards Indonesia's implementation of the necessary structures and systems for the incorporation of disaster risk reduction into the development process, requiring strengthened local capacity and involvement.

27. The Government's insistence on broad participatory mechanisms in aid delivery has led to programmes reflecting the importance of community-driven approaches. Results from an impact assessment show a connection between early adoption of such approaches with the improved quality and sustainability of the recovery process and subsequent community satisfaction. The Government diverted, from its own budget, substantial funding to scale up community-driven reconstruction and recovery, and has recently requested that the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) publish a review of the lessons learned on housing reconstruction, to be completed in June 2008.

28. The Office of the United Nations Recovery Coordinator for Aceh and Nias expanded its key activities to meet the increasingly complex recovery needs focusing on (a) support to the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency for Aceh and Nias, provincial, and local governments in strengthening capacity of disaster risk management activities through coordination and planning mechanisms at various administrative levels, specifically in terms of regionalization of recovery and reconstruction, and (b) coordination support to the United Nations system and recovery community in Aceh and Nias, in particular through the Area Security Management Team, the United Nations team, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the common service user groups.

29. As the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency for Aceh and Nias continues to plan its handover to local government and exit from Aceh and Nias in 2009, all reconstruction partners are considering transitions in their respective programmes. Accelerated efforts must be made to ensure the necessary laws and regulations are in place to facilitate asset handovers, including inventories of assets to be transferred. Capacity-building efforts must be broadly integrated within asset management strategies to ensure continued functionality and maintenance of assets following transfer. Opportunities for stakeholder involvement, including non-governmental organizations, the media and the academic and private sectors through the Aceh Convergence Group, guided by the United Nations Technical Working Group, should be encouraged and pursued. Substantial efforts are being made to promote public education on disaster preparedness and mitigation, including tsunami early warning and evacuation in 300 villages. Stakeholders in promoting people-centred

[1] A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, chap. I, resolution 2.

early warning systems must continue to link communities to formal warning systems within a multi-hazard framework.

Maldives

30. The tsunami flooded all but 9 of the nation's 199 inhabited islands; 2 islands disappeared and 53 islands suffered severe damage. A total of 15,000 people were displaced and one third of the population, approximately 100,000 people, were severely affected by loss of homes, livelihoods and infrastructure. Estimated recovery needs of $393.3 million were met by commitments, although shortfalls exist in some sectors. A total of $141 million was spent by the end of 2006. The pillars of economic activity — tourism, fishing and agriculture — were enormously affected. The fisheries sector received aid for the 82 per cent of damaged vessels and equipment and as cash grants. In the agriculture sector, essential relief assistance of $1.4 million aided 6,000 families and women from 26 islands received livelihood equipment and cash grants towards replacement of tools for home-based income-generating activities. The 2006 Tsunami Impact Assessment Survey improved general knowledge of the impact of the tsunami on women, allowing gender inequalities to be identified and addressed.

31. The drastic effect of the tsunami on the economy, including an initial 62 per cent reduction of gross domestic product (GDP), is now being mitigated by increased revenue from tourism and reconstruction. Following the Government's intensive efforts, the tourism industry has fully recovered and tourist arrivals in 2006 were very close to pre-tsunami levels. The rebound in tourism and fisheries contributed to an extraordinary GDP growth of 18 per cent in 2006, which has since levelled to an average of 8 per cent in 2007. By December 2007, reconstruction and repairs to an expanded number of houses — 3,000 or half of all the houses affected — were undertaken primarily through first-ever community-led processes. The Government recently developed its first national housing policy to address the long-standing issue of housing for vulnerable and low-income groups.

32. In the health sector, work focused on reconstruction, replacement of physical infrastructure and equipment, and strengthening the capacity to respond to future disasters. Four hospitals are being constructed; 6 of the 12 planned health centres have been completed and 4 are under way. A total of 30 health posts will be rehabilitated or reconstructed, of which 24 are complete. With stunting and wasting of children under five years of age a major concern, health centres are being properly equipped in support of a nutrition and child health surveillance system to identify malnourished children for targeted interventions and a project to promote integrated early childhood development is under way in five focus atolls. Twenty-five health-care providers have been trained in voluntary counselling and testing to prevent and control mother-child HIV/AIDS transmission. A comprehensive child protection service was established, including the provision of information for referral services, ensuring children's legal protection through the Juvenile Justice Act, services for protection, recovery and reintegration of victims of violence and abuse and drug demand reduction and risk reduction of HIV/AIDS and other diseases.

33. By the end of 2006, 20 of the planned 87 permanent schools and 5 of 20 planned preschools had been upgraded or rebuilt. Since then, the quality education

programme has expanded to include all nationally registered preschools and, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, has supported the establishment of 20 atoll-based Teacher Resource Centres. These centres are aimed at continuing the implementation of methods to ensure child-friendly learning; moreover, teaching continues to gain momentum.

34. In the fishing industry, recovery targets have been met. Efforts are now concentrated on long-term development, including elaboration of appropriate industry regulations and guidelines, capital investment, technical support for diversification and training for commercial fisherfolk. Agriculture extension methodologies have been introduced on 14 islands. Five community-based fish markets have been constructed and community management of waste has been facilitated on 16 islands.

35. The National Disaster Management Centre, which became a permanent institution in December 2006, has developed a national plan on disaster management. Community-based disaster preparedness plans have been developed in 3 atolls covering 19 islands, with the goal of building capacities of island communities to cope with and manage the impact of disasters and to enhance resilience; replication is planned for 2 more atolls in 2008. The Government's safe islands programme aims to relocate some island populations to seven "safer" islands or to create "safe zones" for isolated communities on distant islands; programme policies focus on building a post-tsunami strategic environmental framework.

36. In supporting infrastructure restoration, six island harbours were repaired and/or reconstructed in 2005 and 2006 and the Government soon will complete reconstruction of another harbour. Upon completion in August 2008, this $6.9 million project will have benefited over 11,000 people. In the monitoring and consultation processes with island communities where harbours were repaired, participatory methods were also used. Mangroves and other coastal ecosystems on Huraa Island were rehabilitated in partnership with the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Wetlands International.

37. Rainwater harvesting kits were provided to households and communities and reverse osmosis desalination plants were mobilized to provide safe water supplies for emergency reserves. Reflecting principles of building back better, model sanitation systems were developed on four pilot islands to ensure sustainability and preserve the environment.

38. The main achievements of the aid coordination project were: establishment of the development assistance database to track and monitor external resources, including its usage as a recovery tool to provide data on all development assistance; an analysis of the aid coordination structures; establishment of a Maldives Partnership Forum that brought international and national communities together to discuss development issues; and periodic reviews of financial needs for the national recovery and reconstruction plan.

39. Although the recovery process is on track, several key challenges remain. One is to increase the pace of housing and harbour reconstruction, in particular of 50 high-priority harbours. Implementation of the safe islands programme has made modest progress as the Government and communities face complexities of relocating and consolidating communities on different atolls. The May 2007 sea swells that caused severe coastal flooding on 88 of 197 inhabited islands indicates

increasing vulnerability of small island populations and thus underscores the importance of disaster risk reduction and environmental management.

40. Finally, political reform has been a key goal in terms of building back better in Maldives. In early 2005, the Government launched a comprehensive process of governance reform which continues to face serious challenges today. Overcoming these challenges will require a commitment to political compromise and political dialogue on the part of all sides in a process that will require close monitoring and engagement for many years.

Sri Lanka

41. The tsunami devastated over two thirds of Sri Lanka's coast and caused more than 35,000 fatalities. The financial needs of Sri Lanka were estimated at $2.15 billion. A total of $3.17 billion has been committed for reconstruction, of which donors have disbursed $1.81 billion to implementing partners and $1.39 billion were spent by the end of the first quarter of 2008.

42. The majority of those in need of new homes (except in the north-east) are receiving cash grants to rebuild, with the remainder of homes being rebuilt by donors, IFRC, non-governmental organizations, or others. In all, 114,069 houses need rebuilding/repair; 79,184 units are being rebuilt, representing approximately 59 per cent of the total. In terms of donor-driven programmes, there is a continuing need to identify appropriate land on which to build new houses; efforts to meet the need for accurate and complete beneficiary lists continue to cause delays and, in some instances, have led to housing distribution inequities. A total of 135 communities serving as "community development councils" were officially registered as legal entities by the Government.

43. Some 150,000 people lost their source of livelihood, most of whom had been in the fisheries sector, while others were in the service and agricultural sectors; about 80 per cent lost their main source of income and 90 per cent lost productive assets. Livelihood programmes have utilized cash grants, cash-for-work, asset replacement and access to capital through microfinance; in the north and east especially there is continued demand for cash grants and cash-for-work programmes. In the fisheries sector there is continued concern regarding the oversupply of small day boats, which is causing labour shortages and harbour capacity problems, as well as the need for multiday boats, which typically catch about one third of the total fish supply. Repair/replacement of these vessels has been underfunded thus far. The tourism sector has also been greatly affected by the upsurge in conflict, which has led to a significant decrease in tourists, thus impacting small-scale operators.

44. Primary emphasis in the education sector has been reconstruction of damaged facilities. The Government was able to secure funding to repair just over one half of the schools used to house internally displaced persons. Sadly, most school reconstruction projects in Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu and Vavuniya, and multiple projects in the east were abandoned owing to conflict-related access restrictions. The same reality exists for health infrastructure.

45. Continuing challenges for the health sector include the need to begin large-scale construction projects, build capacity of health-care workers and communities,

and improve local-level coordination. In terms of education, programme monitoring has significantly slowed in conflict areas and funding gaps remain. While progress has been made in repairing infrastructure, challenges persist and include difficulties in procurement and logistics, increasing costs of construction materials, insufficient skilled contractors and lack of coordination. In addition, restrictions imposed on the movement of civilian, United Nations and non-governmental organization vehicles in parts of the north led to a shortage of drugs in local hospitals and clinics.

46. The most significant challenge to the recovery process in Sri Lanka is ongoing civil conflict. Escalating violence over the past few years has set back reconstruction efforts in the north and east of the country, though it continues largely apace in the south. The conflict has also impacted livelihoods of around 2.5 million people, hampering the economic recovery of tsunami-affected areas. Security concerns have posed operational hurdles across a range of sectors, making it difficult or impossible for international aid partners to move or deliver assistance and supplies. Restrictions on transportation of certain construction materials, such as cement and steel, as well as difficulties in accessing certain areas have hampered recovery.

47. United Nations organizations are assisting with disaster risk reduction mainstreaming into local-level development planning through a country risk profile to identify vulnerable areas. National capacities are enhanced through the Disaster Management Centre, the establishment of an Emergency Operations Centre and the creation of early warning systems in selected areas. In terms of assistance to policy development, United Nations organizations have played a pivotal role in supporting the deliberations of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Natural Disasters and the subsequent development and adoption of the Disaster Management Act.

48. Expert support has been provided for the conduct of strategic environmental assessments and built considerable momentum towards the adoption of mandatory strategic environmental assessments provisions. Pilot assessments were conducted in Trincomalee Bay, Panadura and Hambantota District, with contributions from the Government and local universities. In addition, a mangrove reforestation programme, implemented by the Forestry Department in conjunction with a community-based organization, established a mangrove nursery in Ampara District. Three lagoon sites, totalling 55 hectares, were also identified for the planting of seedlings.

49. A large proportion of livelihoods, housing and environmental projects have been conducted through community-based organizations. To increase institutional capacities for future development, the "Strong Places" project helped over 700 community-based organizations to actively strengthen participation. These projects, among others, intend to develop community skills and organizational structures, and will hopefully enhance their roles in the development process of their environments — a legacy intended to continue well beyond the tsunami recovery process.

Thailand

50. Hundreds of thousands of people were affected by the tsunami in Thailand. Over 8,200 people were killed, 400 fishing villages along the Andaman coast were seriously hit and tens of thousands of people in the fisheries and tourism sectors lost

their means of livelihood. The tsunami also seriously affected the environment, with marine and coastal national parks severely damaged, coral reefs destroyed and agricultural land affected by saltwater intrusion.

51. A total of 4,806 houses were destroyed or damaged. Owners of 4,110 of such houses requested support from the Government, which planned to rebuild 3,558 houses and provide cash support for repairs of 552 others. Land issues — mostly relating to community losses of ancestral, yet informally owned, land — caused many delays. Major land disputes submitted by tsunami-affected communities have been resolved by the Government Subcommittee on Resolving Tsunami-related Land Rights Issues.

52. Significant progress has been made in other areas as well. The Government's intensive weighing programme has contributed to the nearly 6 per cent reduction in malnutrition rates among children in the six tsunami-affected provinces. Twenty-four schools were destroyed or damaged; of these, all but one have been replaced or repaired, with the remaining school under construction. Efforts in the education sector have also aimed to improve the quality of facilities for marginalized groups. Through a new initiative, safe drinking water and toilets are being brought to schools in the poorest ethnic minority and migrant communities of Krabi, Satun and Trang provinces. Forty of the 48 destroyed or damaged health facilities have been repaired or rebuilt.

53. The competition on the development of the best community work plan for effective and durable disaster preparedness and response project was initiated in May 2007 by the National Disaster Warning Centre and the United Nations to promote local design and implementation of work plans for disaster preparedness and response. The project which ended in December 2007, was piloted in 24 villages/schools throughout 6 Andaman coastal provinces and encouraged creative community participation in finding effective, practical and durable disaster preparedness and response solutions. It resulted in (a) the establishment of sea-level gauge stations for the national early warning system and (b) enhancement of institutional disaster risk management capacities and community preparedness.

54. Many of the challenges that Thailand will encounter throughout its recovery are long-term systemic ones for which the Government has implemented new strategies and policies. The Royal Thai Government, in recognition of the country's inadequate disaster management following the tsunami, enacted the new Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Act in November 2007. The law has significantly altered Thailand's disaster management system; the National Disaster Management Committee has also been restructured to increase efficiency and improve inter-ministerial coordination.

55. The continued engagement of local government in the ongoing recovery effort is critical, as local government institutions are better equipped to orchestrate the type of community participation required to ensure that outcomes are truly anchored in the needs of affected households. Case studies and toolkits based on pilot testing, which are to be used for local government planning, are produced under the project entitled, "Support for rehabilitation of traditional communities and municipalities in tsunami-affected areas in Thailand", and include lessons learned and local testimonies of the rehabilitation process. The documents are distributed nationwide to local governments and other relevant stakeholders.

56. In June 2006, the Coca-Cola Company, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Foundation, started the project entitled, "Working with communities to meet water and sanitation needs sustainably", with 4 villages/communities selected for water resource development implementation on Lanta Island for the Thailand component. Since the project's completion at the end of 2007, the governor and local authorities have committed themselves to continue livelihood and recovery efforts in the area. UNDP also assisted in the mobilization of funds from the Global Environment Facility and the South-South programme for a coastal forest management project and a community-managed boat repair shop. In addition to the relief and development efforts, the project also facilitated the resolution of land dispute problems through human rights intervention.

Malaysia, Myanmar, Seychelles, Somalia and the United Republic of Tanzania

57. The tsunami was extraordinary in both the intensity of its devastation and its wide geographical reach, with waves impacting land and people 4,000 miles from the earthquake's epicentre. Apart from the five worst-affected countries, Malaysia, Myanmar, Seychelles, Somalia and the United Republic of Tanzania also experienced varying degrees of destruction.

58. The tsunami was the worst disaster in Malaysia's history, claiming 69 lives and destroying or damaging the houses of 8,000 people, many of whom lived in poor fishing communities. In Myanmar, the official death toll was 61, with 200 villages and 10,000 to 12,000 people directly or indirectly affected along the southern coast. The tsunami damaged housing and infrastructure in Seychelles, where 2 people were killed and 950 families were displaced. In Somalia, the tsunami struck just as the drought was coming to an end and livelihoods were beginning to recover from flash floods, freezing rain and environmental degradation. A total of 289 people were killed and 44,000 people required emergency humanitarian assistance. In the United Republic of Tanzania, the tsunami claimed 12 lives.

59. In Somalia, construction of schools has resulted in the highest enrolments in the past 15 years. In Malaysia, best practices from HIV/AIDS interventions in tsunami-affected areas, such as harm reduction and prevention of mother-to-child transmission, have contributed to the National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS. In Myanmar, more than 60,000 families received insecticide-treated bed nets to prevent malaria.

III. Status of implementation of recommendations contained in the 2007 report of the Secretary-General (A/62/83-E/2007/67)

A. Coordination in the humanitarian and recovery phases

Dedicated field-based recovery management structures

60. The established network of field offices in 8 districts (12 at the height of the tsunami recovery process) in Sri Lanka proved invaluable in the immediate

aftermath of the tsunami and during the reconstruction thereafter. The familiarity of field office staff with the on-the-ground situation helped immensely to quickly obtain needs assessments and develop needs-based project proposals for the recovery effort.

61. In Indonesia, at the request of the Governor of Aceh and the director of the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency for Aceh and Nias, a nearly finalized integrated planning, coordination and monitoring framework for recovery, the Aceh Recovery Framework, was developed. This framework, led by provincial government chairs and supported by the Agency and international partners, ensures interlinkages between vital areas of Aceh's transition: ongoing peace processes and reintegration efforts, rule of law, good governance and democratic decentralization, economic development, infrastructure and housing reconstruction and basic social services — as well as cross-cutting issues, such as environment and gender. This framework will map the way for capacity-building and asset management to support a carefully considered handover from the Agency to the local government in 2009.

62. At the district level, a United Nations/Agency-supported coordination mechanism for recovery was piloted by the Governor of Aceh Timur. Its success has spurred 21 additional mechanisms across Aceh and Nias which are critical to regionalizing and sustaining coordination and planning at the district level; they are administered by a revamped joint secretariat comprising local government, the Agency and the United Nations. The forum offers a structured mechanism to ensure a participatory approach in developing, coordinating, executing and monitoring district recovery and development plans with the involvement of representatives from, inter alia, civil society, international agencies, local government, the Kecamatan Development Programme, and the Agency's regional office. The forum's key deliverables are a comprehensive recovery strategy in each district, as well as a recovery planning profile of the best available district data.

63. To enhance coordination and better manage challenges and opportunities across thematic and geographical areas, a virtual knowledge management network of international and local recovery/governance professionals and decision makers is being implemented in 2008. This network, an international United Nations best practice known as "solutions exchange", will develop six virtual "communities of practice" supported by a coordination and research secretariat to ensure high-quality, timely and targeted solutions in all phases of recovery and governance planning, programming and implementation. Importantly, the network will capture and continue to benefit from the expertise of the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency for Aceh and Nias and other partners that will remain in the network after 2009.

64. To facilitate the recovery process, in particular regarding shelter and infrastructure, community-driven approaches were implemented to ensure that skills and investments remain in communities and strengthen donorship and solidarity. Training communities and local government officials to enable this process was also essential.

B. Different models of Government humanitarian and recovery institutions

1. Continued reform of recovery institutions

65. Under the provisions of the aforementioned Disaster Management Bill, Indonesia established a National Disaster Management Agency to provide comprehensive disaster risk reduction leadership, including emergency response through routine sectoral programmes and specially earmarked funds in national, provincial and district budgets. The law is based on the premise that protection from disaster hazards is among the basic rights of the population and confirms the role of Government as the duty-bearer in ensuring such protection. The provisions also highlight the need for integration of disaster risk reduction into national development programming and the allocation of sufficient funds for that purpose. Furthermore, when a state of disaster is declared, the Agency will exercise special authority in leading and coordinating the response, including undertaking early recovery leading to rehabilitation and reconstruction, as also provided for in the new law. The head of the new Agency will have Cabinet rank.

66. As a part of its comprehensive assistance to national disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management efforts, Sri Lanka continues to provide technical support and capacity development to the Disaster Management Centre, the newly established lead agency for all disaster risk reduction efforts in the country. Furthermore, the capacity development for recovery programme offers an integrated package of support to public sector institutions involved in tsunami recovery, assisting them to develop/sustain the capacities of these institutions for effective service delivery beyond the recovery effort. In Indonesia, the Governor of Aceh convened a Flood Preparedness Working Group to support his administration's preparation of contingency and response plans to annual floods, known to wreak disaster in communities and disrupt livelihoods, school and mobility for days and even weeks. Efforts to develop a flood preparedness database of international capacity should further improve flood response and mobilization times.

2. Assessing damages and needs

67. Partners of the Tsunami Recovery Impact Assessment and Monitoring System (TRIAMS) have made some key recommendations that should be taken into consideration by those proposing reform in needs assessment processes:

- Coordination between various line ministries and data collection agencies is vital, as some data, although readily available, are not routinely shared; United Nations and other stakeholders must support coordination between and within these ministries and agencies
- For information to be useful, data disaggregation should be carried out at the smallest possible denominator (subdistrict or village level) depending on the type of data being collected; data collection should include non-affected populations in order to monitor potential inequities created or exacerbated by disaster response. Such an approach would provide decision makers with a more coherent empirical base so as to deter responders from "doing harm" through application of overly stringent targeting policies and practices

- It is important that both absolute numbers and percentages be included in the data collection process so that the extent of the destruction, the scope of the losses and the resilience of the community may be captured
- The fact that good decision-making and programming is based on good information requires that data be analysed/transformed into a useful product for decision makers. To date, the myriad systems established during tsunami response have been inconsistent in providing decision makers with good information.

C. Transparency and accountability to donors, including financial tracking and reporting, monitoring and evaluation, and measuring progress

68. In his reports for 2006 (A/61/87-E/2006/77) and 2007 (A/62/83-E/2007/67) the Secretary-General noted the development of several tools to increase transparency and accountability of the myriad actors involved in the tsunami response. Important progress was made in the development and implementation of several of those tools, notably the development assistance database, TRIAMS and the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition.

1. Development assistance database

69. The Secretary-General's recommendation that all local and international organizations provide comprehensive information to the development assistance database systems (A/61/87-E/2006/77, para. 69) has been addressed and continued. The four national databases established to track recovery and reconstruction have been updated regularly and provide data on projects and assistance. Members of the public, Governments, donors and all interested parties have open access to the databases; pre-prepared reports posted on country websites for Sri Lanka and Thailand provide additional new standards of decision-making, accountability and transparency. The databases have been shared with and drawn upon by the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions in its review of tsunami assistance.

70. A major thrust of the Organization's technical support for the databases has been capacity-strengthening of Government agencies to manage databases, to maintain/update systems locally and to ensure long-term sustainability of the tool. A second component has entailed system adaptation, enabling response to broader and longer-term accountability and transparency — beyond tsunami-related goals. Thus, in Sri Lanka, the database has been adapted to account for non-governmental sector contributions (including civil society organizations/non-governmental organizations and the private sector) to recovery and long-term development initiatives. In Maldives the system has evolved towards tracking the overall national budget, including domestic resources used in preparing the public sector investment programme. In Indonesia, the development assistance database has been integrated into the database of the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency for Aceh and Nias as a monitoring and planning tool.

71. All local and international organizations should continue to support efforts of responsible Government authorities to assume full responsibility for the

management and sustainability of the development assistance databases, including continued adaptation for accountability and transparency-related uses in areas extending beyond the tsunami and increased integration with local government structures and civil society actors. This may ensure continuity in monitoring financial commitments and disbursements as well as expand the scope of the database to include aspects such as output tracking indicators at the higher and disaggregated level to monitor non-official development assistance funded projects.

2. Tsunami Recovery Impact Assessment and Monitoring System

72. TRIAMS is a common analytical framework designed to assist Governments, aid agencies and affected populations in assessing and monitoring the rate and direction of tsunami recovery. It has four main components, namely: (a) outcome and impact indicators collected largely through existing Government surveys; (b) core and country-specific monitoring indicators collected largely through routine information systems; (c) various methods devised to measure perspectives of affected populations; and (d) additional methods allowing for helpful triangulation in analysing and interpreting quantitative findings. It is significant that the TRIAMS framework addresses gaps in analytical approaches of the United Nations and other actors involved in recovery. Analysis conducted in Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Maldives has demonstrated how existing data can be mapped against current needs assessments and disaggregated to the subdistrict, island or village level so as to reveal significant progress, occasional over-commitments and other gaps in recovery work.

73. In Indonesia, the Information and Analysis Section in the Office of the United Nations Recovery Coordinator, working with the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency for Aceh and Nias and the provincial government, prepared the second Tsunami Recovery Indicator Package report for presentation by the Agency at the TRIAMS workshop in Bangkok (2007) and again at a workshop in Banda Aceh. To meet the evolving needs for analysis and programming, the second Package features 80 additional indicators on prevalent social, cultural, demographic and economic conditions in Aceh and Nias.

74. The Government of Maldives, through the Ministry of Planning and National Development, has led the implementation of TRIAMS with ongoing support from UNDP, the World Health Organization (WHO) and IFRC. In order to continue progress and sustainably build Government capacity, the Ministry has developed three extensive proposals for which it has sought support.

75. The Government of Sri Lanka requested United Nations leadership in the qualitative assessment segment of the TRIAMS initiative at a workshop in Bangkok (May 2006). Beneficiary perception surveys were conducted in five affected districts and, alongside the University of Colombo, UNDP built upon the highly successful Peoples Consultations on Tsunami Recovery project to conduct focus group discussions with beneficiary communities across six affected districts as part of the TRIAMS effort. The two components should provide a comprehensive set of qualitative data on beneficiary perspectives regarding recovery. In addition, the United Nations Children's Fund and WHO have supported key staff of the United Nations Resident Coordinator to conduct district and subdistrict analyses in the health, education and livelihood sectors, further demonstrating the potential power of the TRIAMS framework as a coordination tool.

76. In overall terms, significant progress has been made in further developing and piloting the TRIAMS framework. Participating countries updated and added disaster risk reduction indicators to the framework in April 2007, reflecting important changes to the recovery situation in most countries. At least two countries are attempting to link the TRIAMS framework with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework to allow smoother transition of monitoring and evaluation systems supported by various stakeholders and, more importantly, to encourage the framework process to empower local decision makers by supporting disaggregation of data and analysis to the lowest level possible. A few countries are working with United Nations agencies and others to apply this approach to the Millennium Development Goals.

77. The Tsunami Evaluation Coalition produced five thematic evaluations and two synthesis reports in 2006. Four main findings and over 200 sub-recommendations were noted in the initial synthesis report. Coalition members continue to disseminate findings to various actors and, more importantly, to benchmark utilization of the recommendations. This work is expected to continue throughout 2008, with milestone events planned at United Nations agencies; international, bilateral organizations, non-governmental organizations and others will discuss their approaches in adopting the Coalition's recommendations, many of which have been noted throughout the present report.

3. Making information on accountability available to civil society

78. Transparency and accountability have been seen as central to the tsunami recovery programmes and several initiatives were implemented to address these issues. The "Strong Places" project in Sri Lanka piloted an Aid/Watch initiative to empower communities to monitor the progress of projects.

79. UN-Habitat ensured a full evaluation of its community-organized housing schemes. For instance, in Indonesia community audits were triangulated with detailed statements of the partnering microfinance bank, while a local university provided an in-depth post-construction evaluation, which involved many community focus groups.

D. Risk reduction, tsunami early warning and incorporation of prevention in development planning

80. Since the tsunami, many measures to evaluate/strengthen early warning systems have focused principally on establishing, inter alia, system governance structures, technical advice and implementation, public awareness and preparedness, and training.

81. Several targeted training activities involving more than 150 national officials and researchers have taken place in tsunami-affected countries and continue to deliver culturally appropriate public awareness and educational materials throughout the region. A series of milestones have measured progress in establishing official tsunami warning focal points, enhancing detection networks and communications, and defining comprehensive national plans for each country participating in the process.

82. Today, the Indian Ocean tsunami early warning system includes seismological and oceanic observation networks, regional analysis and advisory centres, and national tsunami warning centres linked to national risk assessment and preparedness activities. Twenty-five of 28 possible nations have established official tsunami warning focal points capable of receiving and disseminating tsunami advisories around the clock. The Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System, coordinated by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, offers an excellent example of cooperation between Member States, United Nations organizations and donors. It has taken decisions on the underlying technologies to be employed and the mechanisms for regional governance, funding, cooperation and communications. At its fifth session, in April 2008, the Coordination Group welcomed offers by India (as at June 2008), Australia (July 2008) and Indonesia (November 2008) to act as regional tsunami watch providers, replacing the interim service provided by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre in Hawaii, United States of America, and the Japan Meteorological Agency by 2011.

83. As at May 2007, 11 Indian Ocean countries had submitted national action plans to overcome this gap in developing national capacity. A consortium of seven partners in the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction system offer advisory and implementation support to Governments that have fallen behind in developing national capacity. During 2007, the seven consortium members undertook measures to strengthen the regional and in-country coordination of ongoing and planned partner activities.

84. Under the coordination of the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, a major achievement has been the establishment of partnership and coordination mechanisms across a wide spectrum of partners and donors, providing a concrete example of the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action. At the national level, countries are working to establish clearer responsibilities to ensure people-centred early warning systems. However, critical elements of community preparedness, community education and outreach programmes are generally not yet in place in most countries. Only a few countries have developed tsunami emergency plans or tested response procedures for tsunamis and earthquakes. Moreover, much of the data needed to develop these plans have yet to be collected. Nevertheless, there is a much greater awareness among all policymakers of the importance of these disaster risk reduction and environmental issues.

E. Looking forward

85. The 2006 and 2007 reports highlighted a number of issues which guided recovery and reconstruction efforts and policies, and subsequently influenced significant progress, achievements and outcomes. In the most severely affected countries, these efforts are now being mainstreamed into long-term development assistance projects and programmes. In this light, it is felt that continued specific reporting to the Economic and Social Council is no longer warranted.

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Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation: follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly and the Council

Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation: reports of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme

Letter dated 11 June 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Mozambique to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

As you are aware, the Government of the Republic of Mozambique hosted a seminar for the representatives of the eight Governments of the "Delivering as One" pilot countries (Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay and Viet Nam), together with representatives of the Government of Malawi, in Maputo from 21 to 23 May 2008, to review the lessons learned from the one year of experience of their countries in the implementation of the Delivering as One initiative and to exchange views on how to move the process forward, while advancing the implementation of the recommendations contained in General Assembly resolution 62/208.

I wish to seize this opportunity to thank you most sincerely for the valuable support provided by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations Development Group Office, the United

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Nations Evaluation Group and the United Nations Country Team of Mozambique in organizing and facilitating the event.

The text of the summary statement of the outcomes of the Maputo seminar, setting forth the findings of the one year of experience of the programme pilot countries in Delivering as One and recommendations on the way forward is transmitted herewith for your consideration (see annex).

Among the general findings, the meeting stressed, inter-alia, that the participating countries had become pilots at the specific request of their national Governments in the hope that a more coherent United Nations system would better support the Governments in achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

The participants further emphasized that national ownership in their development partnership with the United Nations system had been enhanced through the Delivering as One process. They noted the great diversity of their national circumstances and agreed that in their experiences in Delivering as One, the "no one size fits all" principle was also being upheld.

The seminar reaffirmed the gains made by the Delivering as One pilot countries and the other participants with respect to enhancing Government leadership of United Nations system operational activities for development, in line with relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution 62/208.

Initial indications were that the pilot process was yielding positive results in ensuring the presence of a more effective and coherent counterpart of its national partners, and that reports of both the Governments and the United Nations country teams indicated there had been increased availability of the United Nations system's mandates and expertise for meeting the objectives of national plans and priorities.

The lack of predictability and timeliness of funding, the lack of harmonization and simplification of business practices, high transaction costs of the United Nations generally, poor alignment of United Nations capacities with the priorities of programme countries, and a low level of use of national operational capacities were found to be among the major constraints on full implementation and acceleration of the Delivering as One initiative.

The seminar provided a set of specific recommendations for accelerating the implementation of General Assembly resolution 62/208 in areas of national ownership and leadership, alignment of United Nations capacity to the needs of programme countries, coherence of budgetary and funding processes, leadership and coordination of United Nations country teams, joint offices and simplified business practices, among other equally important objectives.

I should be grateful if you could arrange to have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 57 of the preliminary list, and of the Economic and Social Council, under agenda items 3 (a) and (b).

(*Signed*) Filipe **Chidumo**
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative

Annex to the letter dated 11 June 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Mozambique to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Summary statement of outcomes and the way forward of the seminar of the programme pilot countries on Delivering as One: exchange of experiences and lessons learned

Maputo, 21-23 May 2008

1. Representatives of the eight Governments of the "Delivering as One" pilot countries (Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay and Viet Nam), together with representatives of the Government of Malawi, met in Maputo from 21 to 23 May 2008 to review the lessons derived from the one year of experience of their countries in Delivering as One and to discuss how to move forward while advancing the implementation of the recommendations contained in General Assembly resolution 62/208.

2. The participants in the seminar express their thanks to the Government of Mozambique for hosting the seminar, Luísa Dias Diogo, Prime Minister of Mozambique, for her inspiring address at the opening of the seminar, the Co-Chairs of the General Assembly Informal Consultations on System-wide Coherence for their active participation, and Anna Tibaijuka, General and Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), for her statement on behalf of the Deputy Secretary-General. The participants also express their thanks to the Australian Agency for International Development for its provision of support to this meeting and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations Development Group Office, the United Nations Evaluation Group and the United Nations Country Team of Mozambique for their valuable support in organizing and facilitating the event.

Introductory comments

3. The participants stress their commitment to the full and speedy implementation of General Assembly resolution 62/208, adopted without a vote, on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. In that resolution, the Assembly encouraged the Secretary-General to support "programme country pilot" countries in evaluating and exchanging experiences and lessons learned with the support of the United Nations Evaluation Group (para. 139). The participants consider the present seminar to be a response to paragraph 139 of that resolution and a contribution to the proceedings of the operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation segment of the substantive session of 2008 of the Economic and Social Council.

4. The purpose of the seminar was to provide an opportunity for Government representatives of the eight pilot programme countries, and other programme countries with similar processes, to learn from each other on successes, constraints and remaining challenges in implementing the Delivering as One experience and how to move forward. It was also intended to assist those countries in sharing their common perspectives with the United Nations system so that lessons learned could

be used to further the implementation of resolution 62/208 towards greater coherence, efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations system.

5. The participants recognize that, with the exception of Cape Verde and Viet Nam, the reform of the United Nations at country level had started only in 2007. Findings are thus preliminary and pertain to process aspects, as it is too early to evaluate development effectiveness of the Delivering as One initiative. A more complete picture will emerge once an independent evaluation has been conducted in 2009-2010.

6. The participants invite the General Assembly to fully support the countries engaged in Delivering as One in their continuing efforts.

General findings

7. The participants stress that the pilot countries became pilots at the specific request of their national Governments. In making such requests, the expectations of the Governments had been high, including the hope that a more coherent United Nations system would better support the Governments in achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

8. The experience of the participants was that national ownership in their development partnership with the United Nations system had been enhanced through the Delivering as One process. They noted the great diversity of their national circumstances and agreed that in their experience of Delivering as One, the "no one size fits all" principle was also being upheld.

9. The meeting reaffirmed the gains made by the Delivering as One pilot countries and the other participant countries with respect to enhancing Government leadership of United Nations system operational activities for development. This increased engagement and direction from national Governments are very much in the spirit of General Assembly resolution 62/208.

10. Initial indications are that the pilot process is yielding positive results in ensuring that the United Nations development system is a more effective and coherent counterpart of its national partners. Reports from both the Governments and the United Nations country teams indicate that there has been increased availability of the United Nations system's mandates and expertise for meeting national plans and priorities.

11. Progress has been made in promoting a more unified United Nations system approach to programming and funding its support to countries, through the one programme and one budget. The Governments involved in the Delivering as One initiative clearly recognize and appreciate the progress made but more needs to be done to avoid fragmentation and deliver as one at the country level. Representatives of the pilot and the non-pilot Governments all recognize the need to work even harder towards the success of the initiative.

12. However, major constraints remain on the way towards implementing fully and accelerating the Delivering as One initiative. These include the lack of predictability and timeliness of funding, lack of harmonization and simplification of business practices, high transaction costs of the United Nations generally, and poor alignment

of United Nations capacities with the priorities of programme countries, as well as a low level of use of national operational capacities.

Recommendations

To accelerate the implementation of General Assembly resolution 62/208, the participants at the meeting representing the nine Governments:

National ownership and leadership

13. Underscore that the principle of national ownership and leadership should continue to guide all operational activities for development of the United Nations at the country level.

14. Recognize that the effectiveness of the operational activities of the United Nations is contingent on both a well-coordinated and well-extended United Nations country team with empowered members, and a well-coordinated Government; and that, where necessary, this may require the establishment of new, or further improvement of existing, national coordination structures so as to provide strategic orientation and programme implementation monitoring functions.

15. Also recognize that the United Nations can play an important role in supporting and strengthening the national role and capacity with respect to coordinating actions of the donor community.

16. Recall that the General Assembly encouraged Member States to invite the United Nations to participate, ex officio, in current and new aid modalities and coordination mechanisms, and its invitation to the United Nations development system to enhance its participation in this regard; and invite the Assembly to give encouragement to the countries concerned in their continuing efforts.

17. Stress that the United Nations operational activities should focus on national capacity-building, provision of normative and policy advice, and strategic support for the reduction of poverty, and make use of national implementation capacities in consultation and coordination with the national authorities concerned.

Specifically to ensure the success of the Delivering as One initiative, the participants at the meeting:

18. Call upon United Nations organizations to support Governments of pilot countries and the United Nations country teams in sustaining efforts to mobilize timely and predictable financial support for the Delivering as One initiative, including through common Government/United Nations mechanisms and processes, and new funding mobilization instruments, where necessary and appropriate.

19. Underline that, in those countries in which the One United Nations programme does not cover the whole United Nations Development Assistance Framework, resources should not be shifted to the One United Nations programme to the detriment of the remaining components of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework.

20. Recognize that the establishment of new national coordination structures has been conducive to strengthening Government ownership and leadership and the alignment of the operational activities of the United Nations with national priorities.

It should be ensured that these structures provide strategic orientation and programme implementation monitoring functions to the Delivering as One process at the country level.

Alignment of United Nations capacity to the needs of programme countries

21. Acknowledge the pressing need to strengthen national capacities and recall the need to ensure a coherent and coordinated approach by the United Nations development system in its support for capacity development efforts of programme countries.

22. Reiterate the need for the range and level of skills and expertise assembled by the United Nations system at the country level to be commensurate with the requirements for delivering on the priorities specified in each country's United Nations Development Assistance Framework or One United Nations plan/programme, in line with the national development strategies and plans, including poverty reduction strategy papers, where they exist, and to correspond to the technical backstopping and capacity-building needs and requirements of developing countries.

23. Stress that cost-saving measures and restructuring processes are not ends in themselves but need to be evaluated in the context of the objective of enhanced effectiveness and impact.

24. Call upon the funds, programmes and agencies to accelerate the reform of their headquarters to enable them to respond more effectively and rapidly to the needs of programme countries, and particularly to the pilot countries of the Delivering as One initiative, which are currently undergoing capacity assessments.

Harmonization and integration of planning and programming instruments

25. Call upon the governing bodies of the United Nations funds, programmes and agencies to urgently take necessary decisions to further simplify and fully harmonize the planning, programming and programme approval process.

26. Call upon the Secretary-General, through the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination/United Nations Development Group, to explore a simplified programme approval process for common country programmes and make suggestions to the Economic and Social Council in this regard.

27. Call upon the United Nations Development Group to make use of the pilots to explore and implement further simplification and harmonization of the country programming process, building on the positive experiences achieved with the common operational document.

Coherence of budgetary and funding processes

28. Call upon donors to make multi-year and unearmarked contributions to the One United Nations programme at the country level to allow for resource predictability and therefore improve the timeliness and effectiveness of implementation of programme activities, as well as to endeavour to fully finance the requirements of the One United Nations programme, without causing this to affect bilateral development programmes.

29. Underline that sector-wide approaches (SWAps) should be increasingly adopted as the mechanism for donor funding at the country level as it moves towards the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and complements the process of United Nations reform at the country level.

30. Recommend, as per paragraph 37 of General Assembly resolution 62/208, that the United Nations should develop a strategy and capacity to help strengthen the national fiduciary and budget management capacity of the Government. This can be conducted as part of the development assistance within the United Nations programme.

31. Urge all donors to recognize a common United Nations progress and financial report format as part of the memorandum of understanding that governs the One United Nations fund.

Leadership and coordination of the United Nations country team

32. Recognize the importance of strengthened leadership of the resident coordinator at the head of an empowered United Nations country team, and stress the importance of strengthening the role, and authority and coordination capacity of the resident coordinator through greater delegation of authority by the funds, programmes and agencies.

33. Call upon the United Nations funds, programmes and agencies to consistently support the resident coordinator recruitment and selection process by encouraging the best candidates to apply. The importance of coordination and leadership capacities of resident coordinators and leaders of local United Nations entities needs to be given due consideration during the recruitment and selection processes.

34. Stress that standard basic agreements between Governments and the United Nations should be amended, where relevant, to reinforce and clarify the responsibilities and accountability subsisting between the United Nations country team and the Governments, while maintaining privileges and immunities.

35. Underscore that all United Nations country teams should adopt codes of conduct on the basis of harmonized models developed by the United Nations Development Group Office, and that these should specify, inter alia, the reporting relationships and communication responsibilities.

36. Underline that there should be mutual accountability among country team members. The resident coordinator should not be the only officer to be held accountable. The performance evaluation mechanisms of the agencies should rapidly include assessment of agency heads' contribution to the cohesiveness of the United Nations country team and its capacity to respond to the priorities of the host country.

37. Call upon headquarters of agencies, funds and programmes to consistently support and promote efforts by United Nations country teams to respond to requests of Governments for enhancing coherence, delivery, and communication as one, including, and particularly, through their regional structures. Concrete performance appraisal should be introduced, where it does not yet exist, in order for managers at headquarters to facilitate the reform process at the country level.

38. Stress the importance of the continuity of the United Nations country team and the resident coordinator, as well as the need for involvement of the resident

coordinator in the selection process of senior United Nations country team members. Headquarters need to improve the succession process for United Nations country team members. Extended vacancies and important disruptions, that is to say, too many changes at one time, should be avoided. The changing of heads and resident coordinators too frequently should also be avoided, if possible.

Specifically to ensure the success of the Delivering as One initiative, the participants at the meeting:

39. Stress that the One United Nations programme/plan between the Government and the United Nations country team should recall that the resident coordinator is responsible, with the support of the United Nations country team, for reporting to the Government on the implementation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (para. 96 of resolution 62/208), notwithstanding the administrative agent's responsibility for reporting on financial issues and, in some cases, on progress, to the donors in respect of the implementation of the One United Nations fund.

Joint offices and harmonized and simplified business practices

40. Call upon the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination to accelerate the process of harmonizing United Nations business practices so as to allow for countries to progress in coherence and effectiveness, while bearing in mind Government-preferred aid modalities.

41. Stress that the United Nations needs to act (quickly) on the issue of human resources, specifically in order to respond to the changes required at the country level owing to United Nations reform (capacity assessments). Staff need to be encouraged so that they are motivated to respond to the needs at the country level.

Specifically, in regard to the pilot countries:

42. Stress that the development of a United Nations premises should be not only viewed as one of the solutions with regard to the harmonization of business practices but also based on cost-effectiveness.

43. Also stress that pilots should be allowed the space to "test" initiatives relating to business practices; otherwise, the planned common services and business practices will remain on a wish list of intentions instead of being translated into actual efficiencies.

Transaction costs, use of savings and increased use of national systems

44. Call upon funds, programmes and agencies to accelerate the implementation of the recommendations contained in paragraphs 37, 39 and 119 of General Assembly resolution 62/208, in which the Assembly requested United Nations agencies to refocus on the increased use of national systems and strengthening capacities, where needed, at country level (finance, procurement, programme delivery, planning and budgeting, monitoring and evaluation), and request the United Nations to undertake assessments of relevant national capacities, identify areas that need strengthening, and set targets for strengthening the required capacities with a view to adopting them.

45. Call upon United Nations agencies, funds and programmes at the headquarters level to allow United Nations country teams, in close coordination with Governments, to identify the best ways and means through which administrative savings can be ploughed back into programme budgets, as mentioned in paragraphs 104 (b) and 114 of General Assembly resolution 62/208, while averting audit objections.

46. Look forward to the work of the Economic and Social Council, through the Development Cooperation Forum, on facilitating the development of clearly defined standards for the provision of development assistance, so as to help promote the adoption and strengthening of national systems by the United Nations.

Specifically, in regard to the pilot countries:

47. Underscore that transaction costs need to be clearly defined and a methodology developed by the United Nations Development Group and Governments on how to measure them. Transaction costs need then to be documented, before, during and after a United Nations reform exercise at the country level. The impact on transaction costs of implementing the recommendations of the capacity assessments needs to be focused on.

48. Call upon the headquarters of funds, programmes and agencies to ensure that missions at the country level are jointly and better coordinated (see paras. 118 and 119 of General Assembly resolution 62/208) and that harmonized outcomes are reported back to the Government.

Communication: coordination with Governments, results and accountability and public awareness

49. Underline also that too many reports have to be prepared by the United Nations country team for various donors and urge donors to recognize a common format for United Nations progress and financial reports.

50. Underscore that, in countries in transition, middle-income countries and other countries in which the United Nations country team needs to rapidly adapt to a changing environment, it is advisable that the Government establish mechanisms that work specifically with the United Nations country team to guide the evolution of the partnership between the Government and the United Nations country team, and continue to enhance the relevance of the United Nations for those countries.

51. Stress that the resident coordinator is responsible, with support from the agencies, for reporting to the Government on the implementation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (para. 96 of General Assembly resolution 62/208). All new United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks should therefore stipulate this responsibility. Call upon the United Nations Development Group to assist country teams in developing common reporting instruments in this regard.

Monitoring and evaluation (including evaluability)

52. While underlining the responsibility of Governments for evaluation as per General Assembly resolution 62/208, recognize that the United Nations system and the Governments will jointly oversee the conduct of the evaluation of the Delivering as One pilots and determine the value added of the One United Nations programme.

53. Stress that experiences (positive and negative) should be shared across pilots to accelerate learning and adopting of best practices. Learning/experiences from the pilots should also be communicated throughout the membership of the United Nations so as to assist possible self-starter countries.

54. Encourage pilot countries to develop a system for self-evaluation based on agreed indicators/targets.

55. Recognize the gaps in pilot countries' level of preparedness for the independent evaluation scheduled for 2010 and resolve to address these gaps as soon as possible, inter alia, by establishing results-based frameworks using simple methodologies.

56. Stress that monitoring and evaluation systems should rely on Government institutions and data to monitor progress, to the maximum extent possible.